

"How Close?"

Scripture: Exodus 34:5-8

(Illustration of boy in church and "God not there")

After attending church with his father one Sunday morning, before getting into bed that evening a little boy knelt at his bedside and prayed, "Dear God, we had a good time at church today, but I wish You had been there."

Now unlike that little boy, the Israelites, definitely Moses in particular knew that God was in their midst. Moses was up on the Mount for the second time with two new stones prepared for God to engrave the Law on them. When Moses ascended the Mount we read, "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord," verse 5.

God appeared to Him in the cloud and spoke to Moses from that cloud and we read of His presence, "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in ~~many~~ goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth generation.'" verses 6-7.

First God identifies Himself as, "He that is who He is, which is what that phrase, "The Lord, The Lord God," literally means in English. God is therefore identifying Himself as The Great I Am. After God does this, He then spells out what He does for mankind. This statement lets Moses know that even though he and the people of Israel are miserable sinners in the sight of God, yet, God will and does forgive and has that covenant relationship with them.

What was the reaction of Moses? The 8th verse tells us, "And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped," verse 8.

Moses was so close to God and he knew that to be in that position required worship to Him. At this point in time, Moses didn't ask anything of God. He was in His presence and that alone was worthy of worship. Moses had been through all of the experiences of talking to God and getting instructions to lead the people of Israel. But now, God revealed Himself through His name. Just the very name of God should inspire us to bow before Him. The Lord God is He that is who He is. Men have tried to convey thoughts of worship and reverence, but not too many seem to hit the true idea of worship. Frederick W. Faber is perhaps an exception to that rule. You may or may not know that it was he who wrote the words for "Faith of Our Fathers." But two of his writings, (not in most hymnals), speak of the worship of God. Listen to how he phrases this:

How wonderful, how beautiful
The sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power
And awful purity.
O how I fear Thee, living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship Thee with trembling hope
And penitential tears.

And he also wrote:

Only to sit and think of God,
Oh, what joy it is!
To think the thought, to breathe the Name,
Earth has no higher bliss!

St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Butler, Pennsylvania
Rev. Ralph Link, Pastor June 24, 1990
Mr. Dale Rice, Minister of Music
Mr. Robert Weisenstein, Liturgist
+ + + + +
CHURCH IN THE PARK SERVICE 11:00 A.M.

Ball

Prelude
Announcements
Congregational Greeting
Joys
Prayer Requests

Ball

*Ascription
*Call to Worship:
Leader - How excellent is Thy loving-kindness,
O God!
People - Therefore the children of men put their
trust under the shadow of Thy wings.
All - For with Thee is the fountain of life;
in Thy light shall we see light.

Ball

*Invocation (In Unison) Eternal God, our Maker and our
Lord, Giver of all grace from whom every good prayer
comes, and who pours His Spirit on all who seek Him:
deliver us when we draw nigh to You, from coldness of
heart and wanderings of mind; that with steadfast
thoughts and pure affections we may worship You in
spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Ball

*Opening Hymn No. ~~67~~ ^{#40} "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine"
- Morning Prayer

Ball

*Offering
*Offertory
*Doxology #29
Hymn No. ~~477~~ ^{#29} "More About Jesus Would I Know"
Scripture: Exodus 34: 5-8
Sermon: "How Close?"
Prayer

*Closing Hymn No. ~~363~~ ^{#11} "To God be the Glory"
*Benediction
*Blessing for the Lunch
*Postlude

+ + + + + *Congregation Standing + + + + +

Ushering today are Dick Mangel, Dick Dally, Donley Martin
and Don Kingsley.

Attendance last Sunday was 85 with 6 visitors.
Van Driver for next Sunday will be Jim Gannon.
Bob Weisenstein and Daryl Merrison will be visiting the
hospital this week.

➤ Hospitalized: Mid Diefenderfer in Allegheny General
Walter Hollefreund in BWH.
Harry Davis in Mercy Hospital

* * * * *
For the next two weeks the Pastor will be on vacation. If
you have a need or an emergency, please call Ginny at
home or in the office.

UPCOMING DATES: Council meeting July 11th

We need to thank the director and staff of VBS for having
a most enjoyable and learning week. Thanks for all of
your efforts. We had approximately 35-40 children each
evening plus an adult class of 7.

JULY 15th - a very important meeting of the congregation
will be held immediately following the service. A
letter will be forth coming with more details. We need
all of you there to handle the issues at hand. Please
make every effort to attend.

CARDS FOR GRAVE SHENGOLD - IN BULLETIN

MA-15
OPAL
ROSE
BILL FAMILY
LINKS
HANK-R.

PRELUDE
GREETINGS/JOYS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRAYER REQUESTS
DURING MY ABSENCE THE NEXT THREE SUNDAYS, GEORGE CANNON
WILL BE FILLING IN FOR ME

FERN
 SALLY
 DIANE
 VRS CALHOUN
 GRACE
 CARL

yes 6-7-41 THAT IS WHO I IS - THE GREAT I AM

Fr. Rick M. Haber - wrote Faith of Our Fathers
 H. WUNDERFUL, HOW BEUTIFUL TH/IS/IS OF THEM MUST
 THEIR WHOLES WISEN, EDELES FOR A AWEL PURITY.
 OH HOW I FEAR THEE, LIVING GOD,
 O DEEPER, TENDEREST FEARS, & WORSHIP THEE O TREMBLING HOPE
 & CONFIDENTIAL FEARS.

ALVO: ONLY 2 BIT & THINK OF GOD, OH, WAT JOY IT IS!
2THINK TH/TROT, 2breath th/NAME, EARTH HAS NO HIGHER BLIS!
FATHER OF JS, JUV'S REWARD, WAT PAPTUP WIL IT B,
PROGTHAT B4 THY THROW 2LY
& GAZE, & GAZ ON THERE.

IF UR CAP STARTS CMC EVRY 3TRY5,IS IT RELIABLE?
IF UR PAYRECE AKTIVE DELIVERY EVRY MON & THURS,IS HF TRUSWORTHY?
IF U DONT GO 2 WORK CMC OR TWIC A MNTU,R U A LOYL EMPLOYEE?
IF UR REFRIG STOPE WORK 4A DAY OR 2 EVRY NCW & THEN,DO U SAY,
CH, WEL IT WORKS MCC OF TH/THK?
IF U WATH HEATR PROVIDS U W/AN ICY SHOWR EVRY NCW & THEN,IS IT
DEPENDLE?
IF U KIS A COUPL OF LOAN PAYMENS EVRY YF,DUZ TH BANK SAY, 10 OUT
OF 12 ISNT BAD?
IF U FAIL 2WORKR G ONE OR TWO SUNDAYS A MNTH,WUD U EXPEC 23 CALLED
A FAITHFUL XPIAN?
WE EXPEC FAITHFULNESS & RELIABILITY EX FR THINGS & OTHER PRO
DUT NOT G EXPEC TH/SAM FR/DE?
1/PROB IS THAT IN OUR RELIG ACTIVTYS WE C OURSELVES AS VOLUN-
TEERS RATHER THAN AS DUTY BND.
FOR A VOLUNTEER,ALMOH ANTH SEEMS ACETLE.
FOO A DUTYSEVR,WHC IS DUTY BND,FAITHFULNESS IS EXPECTED.

(Thus preacher Francois Fenelon to King Louis XIV of France)
in 17th centry Francois Fenelon was cort preschr-K Louis XIV
K ariv, no one ther but preschr
K Louis demant WAT DUT THIS MEANT?
Fenelon reply -I HAD FURLISH THAT U WUD NOT CUM 2 CH 2DAY,
IN ORDE THAT U'D MAJ MITE C WHO SERV'G IN TRUTH & WHO FLATTERS
TH/KING.

How wors - detrm how serv
wors no sub 4servic;nor is servic sub 4 wors
but tru wors is always expres in luvng servic

SCRIP: EX 34:1-8; SERM: "HOW CLOSE?"

(ILUS BOY IN CHURCH, BEDTIME PRAYR & WISH G HAD BIN THER)
(UNLIK BOY, ISITES, & PARTIC MOSES KNU G IN THER MIDST
(BACKGROUND ON SCRIP VSS 1-3)

VS 4=MOSES OBEYS

VS 5 G APPEARS & PROCLAIMS HIS OWN NAME - NO DOUBT WHO HE IS

VS 6 NAME MEANS = HE THAT IS, WHO HE IS IN ENGLISH

THEN SPELLS OUT WAT HE DUZ 4WANK

VS 7=MOSES MADE 2KNO ALTHO ISITES, ALL PEOPL SINNRS, G 4GIVS

(EXPL END VS 7 SIN VISIT ON CHILDREN - THOZ WHO HATE G)

VS 8=NOTIC WAT MOSES DIO - HE WORSHIPO

TH/NAME OF G SHUD INSPIR US 2WORSHIP HIM

MOSES AS CLOS 2 GOD AS CUD GET

MUS WE B THAT CLOS 2 WORSHIP??

WAT SHUD INSPIR US?? JUST HIS NAME

HOW DO WE EXPRES TRU WORSHIP??

(ILUS FREDERICK FABER - WROTE FAITH OUR FATHERS)

HOW CLOSE R WE?? U EVR SIT & THINK OF THAT NAME??

HOW DO WE COMPAR OUR RELATSHIP W/GOD?

(ILUS OF FAITHFULNESS OF THINGS)

JUST WAT IS OUR FAITHFULNES 2GOD & TH/THINGS OF GOD??

(ILUS OF GRANDDAUGHTER & VBS SEVERAL YRS AGO)

HOW CLOSE ARE WE TO GOD???

(ILUS PREACHER FRANCOIS FENELON & KING LOUIS XIV OF FRANCE)

OUR PRIMARY REASON FOR WORSHIP IS NOT:

WHO WILL BE THERE,

WHERE IT IS HELD

AND NEVER UNDER COMPULSION "I HAVE TO WORSHIP"

GOD WANTS OUR LOVE, OUR DEVOTION, OUR WORSHIP

OUR WORSHIP DETERMINES HOW WE SERV

WORSHIP IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR SERVICE,

NOW IS SERVICE A SUBSTITUTE FOR WORSHIP

BUT TRUE WORSHIP IS ALWAYS EXPRESSED IN LOVING SERVICE

"How Close?"

Scripture: Exodus 34:5-8

(Ilus littl boy & believin G wasn't in Church that day)

Now unlik that littl boy, I'm tex, & Mos in partic knu G t'er midst

or went up Mt 2nd tim w/2nu stons reep 4 G engrav on them

When Mos ascend Mt res =Vs 5

2nd tim 2him in cloud & spok 2 Mos & we read His presenc=Vss 6-7

1st G identfy self as: IF THAT IS WHO HE IS

He identfy self as TH/THAT I AM

aftr He duz this He spel wat ddx 4wank

This statem lt Mos kno evn tho he & Isites wer misrbl sinnrs, in

situ of G, yet, G wil/duz 4ptv & hav cov relatsip w/Him

at reactin of Mos = Vs 8

Mos so clos 2 G & he knu that 2B in that positin requir wors

2 Him

at this pt, Mos no ask anyth of G

He in His presenc & that alen worthy of wors

Mos bin thru all expers of talk 2 G, & get instruc 2lead Isites

But now G reveal self thru His Name

jus very name of G shud inspir us 2bow B4 Him

TH/LORD GOD IF HE THAT IS WHO HE IS

men try convy thots or wors/revrenc, but not 2many seem hit tru

idea of wors

Fredrick Faber - wrot Faith our Fathrs & wrot othrs

(Ilus 2 parts of his writings)

How Clos R we 2 God?

do U evr jus sit & t'ink of Him?

do U evr say that nam ovr & ovr, savor richnes of G Th/Father??

wat do we C as our relatsip w/G?

umone wrot list quest on individ Xpian 2othr areas of lif

(Ilus t is list)

is our faithfulness??

(Ilus sample-granddcttr, & girl enthus 4 VBS)

How excited F we bout Ch & worship?

Did we lk 4ward 2cum here this morn?

I kno sum who didnt simpl Bcuz seem Bliev cant wors G unles

insid bldg

but we F here, & I trus Ur enthus is such U wil kno this morn

I wer at wors evn tho it out of doers

How Clos R we 2 God? How Clos is God 2us?

depen on perspectiv bout wors

(Ilus preach Francois Fenelon & King Louis XIV of France)

our primary reason 4 wors shud not B determ wher wors held; nor

shud it B Bcuz who ther; shudnt B undr comoulsin

we shud always wors Bcuz that desir our harts

& shud want wors whthr ch emotv or ful - How Close?

Only as clos as we permit selvs 2draw near 2 God

how we wors detrms how we serv - wors no sub 4 servic, nor is

serv sub 4 wors - but tru wors is alway expres in loving servic

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.